

**MARY BEAVER: OR,  
THE HOUSEMAID'S  
WEDDING.**

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Mary Beaver: or, The housemaid's wedding, by J. W.

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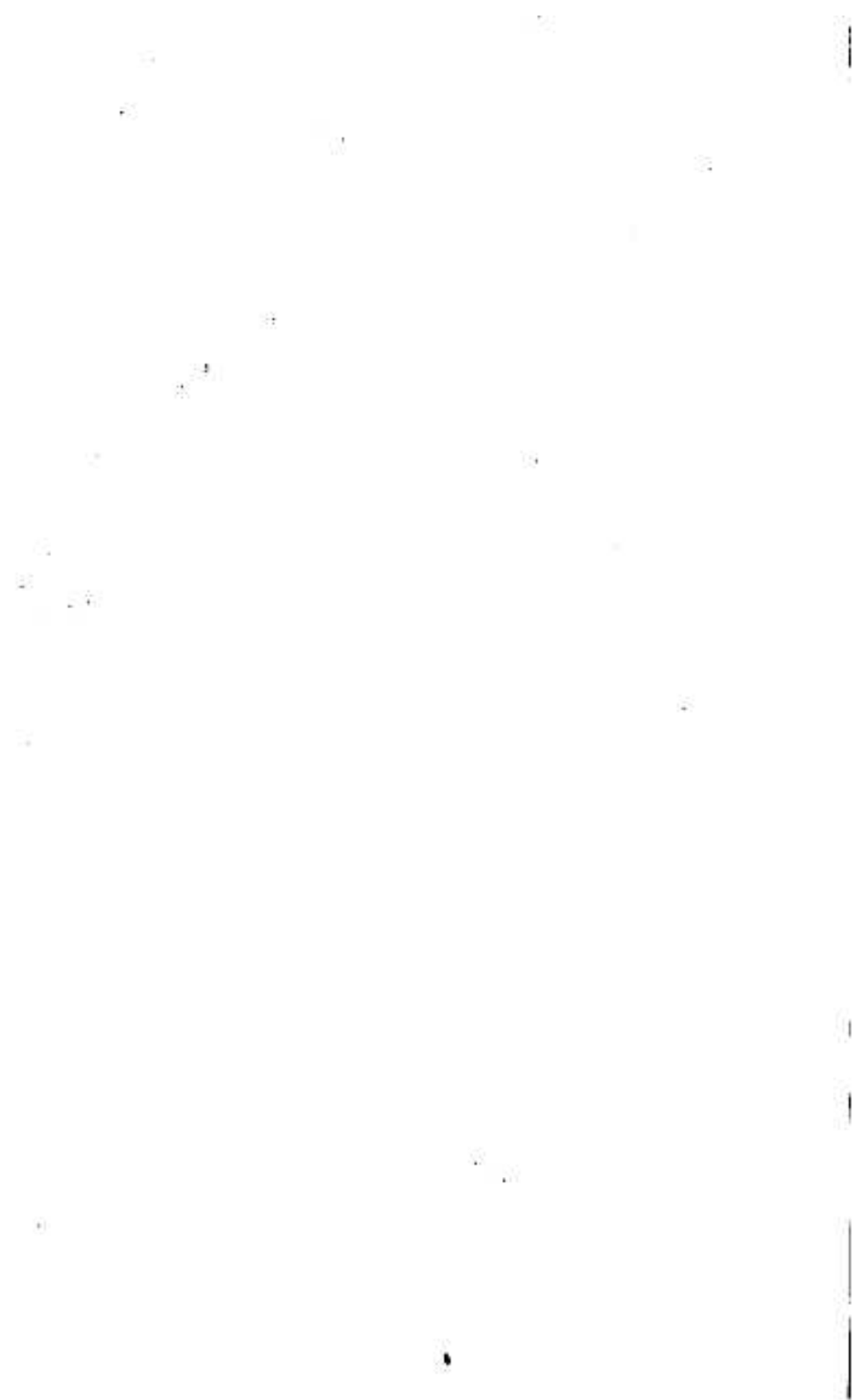
THE HOUSEMAID'S WEDDING.

BY THE LATE J. W.

"She being dead, yet speaketh."

LONDON,  
JOHN HENRY PARKER;  
HENRY B. RECKITT, WIGAN.  
MDCCLV.

249. U. 220.



## MARY BEAVER.

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“ Well, Mary, what does Missus say ?” said the Cook to a nice smart looking maid, who had just come from the parlour, and whose countenance betrayed a blushing interest in what had just taken place.

“ Why,” she replied, “ she says I am old enough to judge for myself, but she fears William is not so good a man as she could wish ; but that you know, Mrs. Jones, is only because she don't know him ; if she did, I am sure she would never say so.”

“ Well, if he'll only keep sober,” returned Mrs. Jones, “ he'll do well enough, I make no doubt ; he's clever and sharp enough, that's certain.”

Mary Beaver was, as I have said, a nice smart looking active good natured girl ; and, more than that, she had been brought up by religious parents, and taught quiet, sober, industrious, cleanly habits. She was a good servant, and had been six years with her Mistress, who was both fond and proud of her, as it was the only place Mary

had ever been in, and Mrs. Banks had taught her all she knew of household work.

Mary had long been courted by William Fairley, a fine, handsome, spirited, clever young man; who could turn his hand to most things, and who was quick and successful in his trade, a joiner. Now there were few young women who would not have been proud to have William Fairley for a lover, and Mary was envied by many; but her love and admiration for his many brilliant qualities made her either blind or careless about seeing, what is of far greater consequence, his religious principles. Alas! William, though brought up with great care and pains, and many prayers, by his father and mother, had wasted his opportunities, and paid little attention to his instruction. Not that he was a bad boy, but he was too high spirited to be an humble learner, and too full of play and fun to be serious on serious subjects. In fact he was like many others, and unable to enter steadily into any subject, but the present passing scene. Notwithstanding all this he was amiable and good-tempered, and much beloved by his companions, who made sadly too much of him, for his own good.

You might guess from all this that poor William was not in a very likely state to resist



temptation, if any should come in his way. He was too ready to follow his first impulse, and had no strong principle to stand against temptation. True, his impulses, hitherto, had chiefly been good ones, and his real, steady love for Mary Beaver seemed likely to keep them so, but no one is permitted to pass through this scene of trial, without either "fighting the good fight," or becoming bound, a prisoner and slave, to Sin. It behoves us all, therefore, to be on our guard, for an attack in the shape of temptation may come any time when we least expect it, and victory be lost for want of watching. Every victory we gain strengthens us for the next conflict, and every loss weakens and disheartens us. Good-nature is a very loveable and pleasant thing in general, yet it may lead those of easy dispositions into sin, and this with poor William Fairley had lately been the case. He was fond of society, and could sing several good songs, so that he had once or twice lately been tempted to join a few of his friends at the public house, just for a chat; but of course when he was there, he could not well refuse a glass of ale when it was offered him, and grievous to say, that glass had lately, more than once, been followed by several more, and William had staggered home a disgrace to himself

and his family. It was this that Mrs. Jones alluded to, when she answered Mary, and though she said it rather roughly, and hurt poor Mary's feelings, yet in the main she was a kind hearted woman, and would have done a good deal to save poor Mary pain; for they had been fellow-servants ever since Mary came. Mary had been a good deal startled on hearing that William had been tipsy two or three times, and she spoke to him about it, and told him she never would marry him, if he frequented the Bush Inn; and William, when he saw her distress, promised not to do so, and kept his word for the present; but he had made the promise in his own strength alone, and, if he himself could have known how very short a time would see all his promises broken through, he would indeed have been greatly shocked. He would have been ready to exclaim with Hazael, "am I a dog that I should do this great thing?"

Mary's interview with her Mistress had been to ask her consent to their speedy marriage, which Mrs. Banks rather reluctantly gave; for, though she knew of their engagement, and feared it would come to that at last, she was far too well learned in the World's ways, not to fear *very* much for Mary's happiness. She told her therefore, all she thought of William Fairley, and

warned Mary of what she must expect, unless it should please Almighty God to convince William, before too late, of the very great danger he was in, of becoming a confirmed drunkard.

"And, you know, Mary," she said, "there is no comfort, or hope, for the wife and family of a drunkard—all you might be able to do to keep things together would be of no use, if your husband once got that fearful appetite, an appetite which allows a man to *starve* his wife and children, to strip his cottage of furniture, to neglect his business, and even to rob his own wife of her very clothes, in order to gratify it. Think over this, Mary, and pray earnestly that you may be led to make a wise choice, and then, trusting to a wiser Guide than any earth can give, I hope you will choose for your temporal as well as eternal good. You are quite old enough to judge for yourself, and you alone can do so, only take time and consider well. It is, you know, a step which cannot be retraced; once taken, it is taken for ever."

Poor Mary was much impressed; but she was deeply in love with William, and thought her mistress harsh; she was sure *she* did not know him, and she forgot how few young men had *never* been tipsy. Surely it was not a great crime